

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 INRE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 PM-05 SP-02
SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 MCE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4744
INFO SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
JCS WASHDC IMMEDIATE
DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY
USDEL MC BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USNMR SHAPE
CINC EUR VAIHINGEN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 00676

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL, MASS, MARR, GW, US
SUBJECT: FRG SUGGESTION FOR US LEASE OF GEPARDS

1. STATE SECRETARY SCHNELL, HEAD OF THE FRG DEFENSE
MINISTRY'S ARMAMENTS DIVISION, SPEAKING IN MINISTER
LEBER'S NAME, PROPOSED TO THE ODC CHIEF ON JANUARY 12
THAT THE U.S. LEASE GEPARDS FROM THE FRG. THEIR
MANUFACTURE FOR THIS PURPOSE WOULD BE FINANCED BY A
CONSORTIUM OF GERMAN BANKS. DR. SCHNELL SAID THIS
WOULD OF COURSE REQUIRE A NEGOTIATED ARRANGEMENT
BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE FRG. HE ASKED IF THE U.S.
WOULD CONSIDER THE LEASE OF GEPARDS UNDER SUCH AN
ARRANGEMENT.

2. COMMENT: SUCH A PROPOSAL APPEARS TO BE WITHOUT
PRECEDENT. WE ASSUME THAT IT WAS MADE BECAUSE THE
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GERMAN GOVERNMENT CONSIDERS THE SALE OF GEPARDS TO
THE U.S. VIRTUALLY PRECLUDED BY THEIR HIGH COST AND
OTHER FACTORS AND VIEWS THEIR LEASE TO THE U.S. AS A
GOOD SECOND BEST. THE DEFENSE MINISTRY COULD PRESENT
SUCH A LEASE TO THE GERMAN PARLIAMENT AND THE PUBLIC
AS BOTH A U.S. VOTE OF CONFIDENCE IN GERMAN TECHNOLOGY
AND AN OUTLET FOR GERMAN LOAN CAPITAL AT A TIME OF

EXCESS LOAN FUNDS AND FALLING INTEREST RATES. SUCH A
LEASE COULD BE A PLUS FOR THE POLITICALLY EMBATTLED
LEBER.

3. ACTION REQUESTED: THE EMBASSY REQUESTS GUIDANCE
ON HOW TO RESPOND TO SCHNELL'S SUGGESTION. IF WASHINGTON
IS INTERESTED IN FURTHER DETAILS REGARDING THE POSSIBLE
LEASE ARRANGEMENT, WE COULD MAKE AN APPROACH TO THE
DEFENSE MINISTRY ON THIS MATTER.
STOESSEL

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